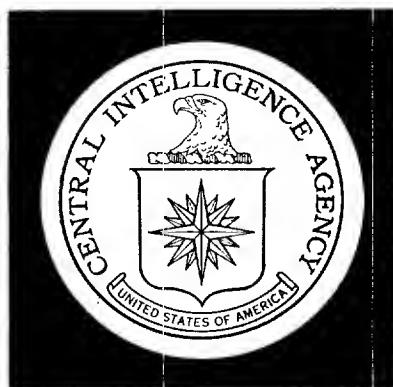


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USSR: In an unusual move to quash rumors of dissension in the leadership Soviet authorities have officially reported the illnesses of four leading members of the politburo.

The four--President Podgorny, Premier Kosygin, and politburo members Suslov and Shelepin--have recently been absent from official functions. Their absences have come amid persistent reports of a major shake-up among officials in the culture and propaganda field perhaps related to maneuvers in the top leadership.

Podgorny canceled a scheduled trip to Japan on short notice, and Japanese officials were informed on 3 April that he would not be able to go because of a cold. Kosygin was publicly active up through 30 March, but he was not on hand to see General Secretary Brezhnev off to Hungary on 1 April.

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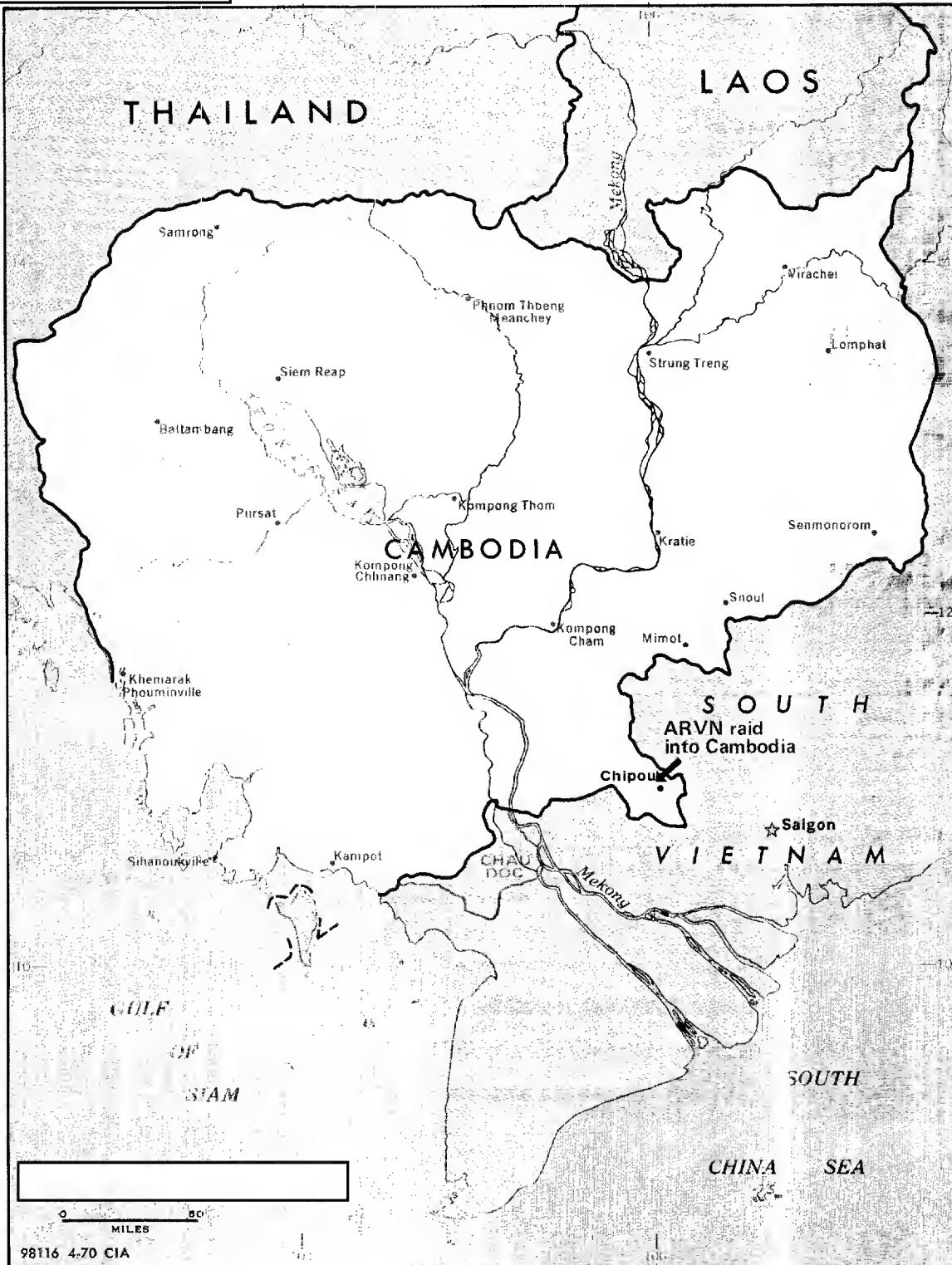
Suslov last appeared in public at a writers' congress on 24 March. Shelepin has probably been ill since late February when he canceled a trip to Sudan at the last moment.

Another politburo member, First Deputy Premier Polyansky, has also been out of sight for several weeks and may have a health problem. He last appeared in public on 24 March and has missed several important affairs.

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South Vietnam: The South Vietnamese raid against Communist base areas in Cambodia on 5 April was carried out by a strong government force.

The US command in Saigon reports that two South Vietnamese battalions supported by armor and air-strikes hit Communist units in the large Cambodian salient west of Saigon. No information is yet available on the results of the attack.

It is unlikely that the latest raid was undertaken without the approval of the highest levels in the Saigon government. The last known foray across the border was on 28-29 March when South Vietnamese ground forces attacked enemy bases opposite Chau Doc Province in the delta.

The Communists, meanwhile, are maintaining pressure against the Dak Seang Special Forces camp in the highlands. South Vietnamese Rangers sent in to help protect the camp fought two sharp actions on 5 April. The Rangers have performed well against previous enemy siege operations. Since 1 April, the South Vietnamese have lost 26 men killed, and at least nine Americans have also died in the fighting. Enemy losses reportedly are about 250 killed.

Elsewhere in the country, light Communist shellings are still numerous, but ground action is tapering off.

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Communist China - USSR: Peking has sharply criticized the Soviet leadership recently, but has avoided sensitive bilateral issues.

A broadcast on 4 April pointedly denounced the current agricultural program of the Brezhnev leadership, and charged that its "Hitler-like" policy of guns instead of butter had worsened an already serious food crisis. In particular it scored Moscow's alleged imitation of the discredited agricultural policies of the Khrushchev regime. In a similar vein, Peking blasted the "Brezhnev renegade clique" last week for selling out Soviet interests in Siberia--a reference to the recent grant of an air route across the USSR--in order to gain favor with the Japanese Government.

Peking almost certainly judges that recent reports of dissatisfaction in the USSR with a number of the regime's current programs have made Moscow vulnerable to this type of attack. Furthermore, Peking probably intends these attacks to be a response to the recent marked increase in Soviet propaganda charges that China is jeopardizing the Peking border talks and engaging in "provocative" military activity along the frontier.

Nevertheless, China continues to mute polemics on bilateral Sino-Soviet problems in order to portray itself as the more reasonable party in the dispute and to avoid giving Moscow a convenient excuse to break off or downgrade the discussions in Peking.

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India: Prime Minister Gandhi's prestige has suffered at least a short-term setback as a result of the rough treatment police gave demonstrators yesterday in New Delhi.

Press reports indicate that 50 persons including six members of parliament, were injured in a melee when police tried to break up a group of about 5,000 demonstrators, led by the opposition Samyukta Socialist Party. They were marching on the national parliament building to demand improvements in social welfare.

Mrs. Gandhi's supporters defeated a subsequent adjournment motion in parliament that implied censure of the government for the police action. The vote, however, was her closest call since the Congress Party split last November.

The prime minister has attempted to cast herself as the champion of the down-trodden and has promised an official inquiry. Government sensitivity on the subject is apparent in Home Minister Chavan's statement offering "one hundred percent apologies." Because police come under his jurisdiction, the opposition parties have demanded his resignation. He is one of the key figures in Mrs. Gandhi's government, however, and is unlikely to be sacrificed unless she considers it essential to preserve her precarious majority in parliament.

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Ethiopia: The principal insurgent leader in restive Bale Province has surrendered.

After five years of sporadic but effective guerrilla activity, Waqo Guto of the rebellious Arusi Galla tribe has finally come to terms with the government and accepted an amnesty. Guto was not defeated in the field, but surrendered as a result of intensive military operations that have been conducted in Bale over the past three months.

The insurgents have never seriously threatened the government's hold on the province. Over the past two years, however, they have been able to tie down increasing numbers of troops in costly and, up to now, largely futile counterinsurgency operations. Moreover, Guto's escapes across the border into Somalia, where he received military assistance as well as sanctuary, periodically added to the chronic troubles between Somalia and Ethiopia.

Guto's surrender may prove to be a mortal blow to the insurgency. If so, it will reduce a heavy drain on the government's financial and military resources. Whether or not the province will stay quiet remains to be seen. The government has ruled this remote and undeveloped area with a heavy and inept hand. It is questionable whether Addis Ababa will take the steps needed to pacify the traditionally restless Arusi Galla with effective local administration, or will be able to furnish the necessary economic and social development projects.

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Dominican Republic: President Balaguer's strong response to public disturbances may dampen opposition enthusiasm for a showdown at this time.

Over the weekend the President reacted to the increased agitation, which has included shooting incidents and widespread student disorders, by closing the schools in the urban areas until June. The government also took control of hospitals currently paralyzed by a doctor's strike.

In typical fashion, Balaguer tempered his stand somewhat by establishing a civilian commission to investigate charges of interference in the electoral process. He also suggested he is willing to talk with opposition leaders who are threatening to boycott the elections on 16 May. Leading church dignitaries have publicly called for a dialogue and opposition figures have contacted Foreign Minister Amiama Tio, who may serve as an intermediary in discussions with the President. Although major outbreaks of violence this week would probably force the disputants to harden their positions, the use of Amiama could provide a face-saving way to move toward a compromise.

The situation is, however, highly unsettled and will remain so until a direct dialogue with Balaguer is opened. There is increased talk of a general strike in the near future. Although the opposition bloc does not appear ready to back such a plan, sporadic work stoppages and further disorders are increasingly likely if the impasse continues.

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East Germany - Somalia: The Mogadiscio government reportedly will soon announce its decision to recognize East Germany. Pankow's Foreign Minister Winzer, who arrived in Somalia yesterday, will probably work out final details. The East Germans have already offered military assistance as a quid pro quo. Somalia will be the eighth "third world" state to recognize Pankow in the past year.

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UN-Cambodia: Most UN Security Council members oppose the possibility of a meeting on the Cambodian situation

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number of the members believe such a session would quickly degenerate into an acrimonious debate between Western and Communist representatives on Southeast Asian issues, including Vietnam. They would also like to avoid what could be a delicate credentials fight in view of Sihanouk's continued claim to legitimacy.

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Guyana-Venezuela: The lack of progress during talks in Tobago last week has dimmed hopes for an interim solution to the border dispute. [redacted]

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[redacted] Venezuela rejected Guyana's proposals that a neutral presence be stationed on the border and that a long-term moratorium on the dispute be declared. Guyana's long-standing offer to submit the quarrel to the International Court of Justice was also refused. Efforts to schedule a meeting between the foreign ministers of both countries are under way. There have been no further clashes since the flare-up last February, but troops remain in position along the border.

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